

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 174

Introduced by Assembly Member Bigelow

April 21, 2016

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 174—Relative to the Buffalo Soldiers Memorial Highway.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 174, as introduced, Bigelow. Buffalo Soldiers Memorial Highway.

This measure would designate a specified portion of State Highway Route 41 from the Mariposa-Madera county line to the entrance of Yosemite National Park as the Buffalo Soldiers Memorial Highway. The measure would also request the Department of Transportation to determine the cost of appropriate signs showing this special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources covering the cost, to erect those signs.

Fiscal committee: yes.

1 WHEREAS, In 1866, the United States Congress created six
2 segregated regiments that were ultimately consolidated into four
3 African American regiments: the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the
4 24th and 25th Infantry; and

5 WHEREAS, African American army regiments that had been
6 dispatched westward fought in the Indian Wars and these soldiers
7 were eventually given the name Buffalo Soldiers by the Cheyenne
8 and other Plains Indians; and

1 WHEREAS, Although historians have recorded the service of
2 these Buffalo Soldiers on the western frontier, their service in some
3 national parks has been nearly forgotten; and

4 WHEREAS, The United States Army served as the official
5 administrator of Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks between
6 1891 and 1913. In that capacity, it helped create a model for park
7 management as we know it today; and

8 WHEREAS, Buffalo Soldiers were among the first park rangers
9 and back country rangers patrolling parts of the west; and

10 WHEREAS, Approximately 500 Buffalo Soldiers, mainly from
11 the 24th Infantry and 9th Cavalry, served in Yosemite National
12 Park and Sequoia National Park. Their duties ranged from evicting
13 poachers and timber thieves to extinguishing forest fires. They
14 also oversaw the construction of roads, trails, and other
15 infrastructure; and

16 WHEREAS, Commanding officers of the United States Army
17 became acting military superintendents for these national parks
18 with two troops of cavalry assigned to each park. Each troop was
19 made up of approximately 60 men; and

20 WHEREAS, The presence of these troops invigorated the local
21 economy and the soldiers acting as official stewards of park lands
22 brought a sense of law and order to the mountain wilderness; and

23 WHEREAS, Among their many accomplishments, the troops
24 assigned to Yosemite National Park oversaw the building of an
25 arboretum near the south fork of the Merced River in 1904. One
26 scholar considered the area to contain the first marked nature trail
27 in the United States' national park system; now, therefore, be it

28 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
29 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby designates that
30 portion of State Highway Route 41 from post mile 1.841 at the
31 Mariposa-Madera county line to post mile 4.918 at the entrance
32 to Yosemite National Park, as the Buffalo Soldiers Memorial
33 Highway; and be it further

34 *Resolved*, That the Department of Transportation is requested
35 to determine the cost of appropriate signs consistent with the
36 signing requirements for the state highway system showing this
37 special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate
38 sources sufficient to cover that cost, to erect those signs; and be it
39 further

- 1 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
- 2 of this resolution to the Director of Transportation and to the author
- 3 for appropriate distribution.

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